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The Level of Development of Students' Competences in Pre-primary Education

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Abstract

The study brings a view at the development of competences of students in the field of kindergartens and tries to find out its level based on evaluation of aspects of individual competences. The research brings results of the current situation and reveals the reserves in the development of key competences based on reflection of the respondents.

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Keywords: Pre-primary education, competences, educationalist, kindergarten

Introduction

For successful management of a kindergarten teacher profession is important to adapt and develop *key competences*. I presume that this issue deserves a great attention as it is not yet completely explored. I was interested in how the female students of Faculty of Education in Hradec Králové (Czech Republic) adopt these key competences during the studies and how these competences are developed at educationalists in their pedagogical activities, who study part-time study programme. In the study I focus on the issue of key competences of educationalists of pre-primary education.

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1. Personality of a kindergarten teacher and competences

A teacher or female teacher is the first person who the child meets in pre-primary education and therefore they must be a certain personality who has general and professional knowledge and skills. For the child he/she is a big idol, who influences him/her for the whole life by his/her behaviour and action. The teacher is thus one of the factors contributing to his/her personality formation. From these and other reasons there is the importance of the educationalist's qualification connected with the development of key competences of educationalists.

By Šikulová (2005, p. 99) *“the teacher plays an important social function; he/she contributes to the children's personality development, the youth's but also the adults'.* With the society change there also comes the change and the role status of the teacher where higher and higher demands appear on his/her professional skills, knowledge and abilities. “

Šmelová (2006) states that, the Framework Educational Programme for pre-school education puts a teacher of a kindergarten/nursery school into these roles:

- A role of a protector and a provider of professional care,
- A role of a knowledge and an experience provider ,
- A role of an adviser and an initiator,
- A role of a diagnostician
- A role of a manager.

Therefore at the end of pre-school education there are foundations of education laid, which are very important for the child at pre-school age, because they indicate the beginning of learning and personality development in the process of lifelong learning and education. In such demanding educational process is necessary to work on the assumption of its individual needs, abilities and skills, from the interested and to act positively on the development of children's competences at pre-school age.

Průcha et al. (2003, p. 103-104) defines the term teacher's competence as *“a set of professional skills and dispositions, which should the teacher be equipped by in order to do his/her profession effectively.”* I do agree with this interpretation, because the competences include not only professional education and pedagogical experience but they are also genetically determined.

Vašutová (2004) divides key competences as follows:

- Subject-sectoral competence,
- Didactic-psychodidactic competence,
- Pedagogical competence,
- Diagnostic and intervention competence,
- Psychosocial and communicative competence,
- Managerial and normative competence,
- Professionally and personally cultivating competence.

In the research study I focused on finding answers on questions: Is there sufficient development of competences of bachelor students on appropriate level? Are there differences in the development of individual competences?

2. Research methodology

The aim of the research was to find out and compare the level of development of competences of female teacher students in the final third year of full-time or part-time study programme of the field Teaching in kindergartens at Faculty of Education University of Hradec Králové of county Královehradecko. In its basic form was to analyse the current situation and to determine the development of individual competences of the female students. It had been assumed that the female students of part-time study programme would be more developed in key competences than female students of full-time study programme.

The survey should determine what the situation is in the development of competences at female students of Faculty of Education UHK. For the presented research I have set following *sub-goals*:

- To analyse individual competences at female students from the full-time study programme
- To analyse individual competences at female students from part-time study programme
- To evaluate the results – obtained data analysis
- To compare the results of pre-primary education students.

The research is based on qualitative comparative survey where a content analysis and a *questionnaire* were used (Nelešovská, 2007, p. 185-187) for students from the field of Teaching for kindergartens/nursery school, that finds out and analyse the level of development of competences based on the reflection of the respondents. The questionnaires' return was as following: From female students of full-time study 100% questionnaires returned and from female students from combined/part-time study 63,6% questionnaires. Gained data was processed with the help of descriptive methods and correlations.

The research sample was made of students of the third year of full-time and part-time study form field Teaching for kindergartens at Faculty of Education UHK.

Process solution:

At the beginning I started to concentrate on the study (journals, internet sources). At first I determined partial research tasks and found an available survey. I specified methodology and the technique for data obtaining. By analysis of the current status, evaluation of data obtained and by statistical processing there was interpretation of results, correlation and a discussion.

3. Interpretation and results' discussion

Interpretation of **selected** research results leads to a discussion, a comparison and follow-ups. From the statistical results I have selected some charts with the most important and significant items.

This subchapter focuses on evaluation of all questionnaires. Because of the fact that the questionnaire is comprehensive, I do not evaluate each question separately, but the key competence as a whole, that contains of other sub-competences.

Table1. Students of full-time study form programme

Key competences	1	2	3	4
K1 Subject competence	7,9	62,7	29,4	0
K2 Didactic and psychodidactic competence	32,3	35,3	32,4	0
K3 Pedagogical competence	26,5	53	19,5	1
K4 Diagnostic and intervention competence	14,7	48,2	34,2	2,9
K5 Social, psychosocial and communicative competence	28,4	48	22,6	1
K6 Managerial and normative competence	17,6	32,4	41,2	8,8
K7 Professionally and personally cultivating competence	37	47,9	14,3	0,8

Table's explanations: The rate of evaluation of development (management) of female students' competences: 1 excellent, 2 very well, 3 well, 4 I do not manage. Answers are expressed in %.

A commentary on Table 1:

Evaluation rating: 1 excellent, 2 very well, 3 well, 4 I do not manage. Answers are expressed in %.

Subject-sectoral competence

Students of full-time study evaluated this competence as excellent (7,9%), very well (62,7%, i.e. absolute majority of interviewed) and well (29,4%). Evaluation – I do not manage did not occur.

Didactic and psychodidactic competence

In this competence there is the number of responses very balanced, but most agreed evaluation by female students is stated as very well. They evaluate it therefore as excellent (32,3%), very well (35,3%) and well (32,4%). The evaluation I do not manage does not appear not even in this competence.

Pedagogical competence

Pedagogical competence is considered by female students as excellent (26,5%), very well (53%, i.e. over a half of majority), well (19,5%) and for the first time there is the occurrence of the evaluation – I do not manage (1%).

Diagnostic and intervention competence

Students stated this competence as excellent (14,7%), very well (48,2%), well (34,2%) and I do not manage (2,9%). They most agreed on the evaluation very well.

Social, psychosocial and communicative competence

Almost a half of female students of full-time study programme manage this competence very well (48%), however they evaluate it as also excellent (28,4%), well (22,6%) and I do not manage (1%).

Managerial and normative competence

The managerial and normative competence is considered to be excellent (17,6%), very well (32,4%), well (41,2%) and I do not manage (8,8%). From the response is clear that the female students manage this competence mostly well and very well, however there is a higher percentage of evaluation occurrences – I do not manage.

Professionally and personally cultivating competence

Students evaluate the competence as excellent (37%), very well (47,9%, i.e. almost a half of interviewed, well (14,3%) and I do not manage (0,8%).

Table2. Students of combined/part-time study

Key competences	1	2	3	4
K1 Subject competence	40,5	45,2	14,3	0
K2 Didactic and psychodidactic competence	42,9	46,4	10,7	0
K3 Pedagogical competence	54,8	39	5,9	1
K4 Diagnostic and intervention competence	50,7	44,3	5	2,9
K5 Social, psychosocial and communicative competence	59,5	34	6	1
K6 Managerial and normative competence	33,9	41,1	25	8,8
K7 Professionally and personally cultivating competence	52	39,8	8,2	0,8

Table's explanations: The rate of evaluation of development (management) of female students'competences:1 excellent, 2 very well, 3 well, 4 I do not manage. Answers are expressed in %.

A commentary on Table 2:

Subject competence

Female students of part-time study evaluated the subject-sectoral competence as excellent (40,5%), very well (45,2%), well (14,3%) and evaluation of I do not manage did not appear. Therefore the majority manages it very well.

Didactic and psychodidactic competence

Similarly the students evaluated also this competence, i.e. excellent (42,9%), very well (46,4%), well (10,7%) and evaluation – I do not manage- does not appear.

Pedagogical competence

Students evaluated this competence as excellent (54,8%, i.e. over a half of majority interviewed), very well (39,3%) and well (5,9%). Not even one single answer I do not manage appeared.

Diagnostic and intervention competence

This diagnostic and intervention competence is considered by students as excellent (50,7%, i.e. over a half

of majority), very well (44,3%), well (5%) and evaluation – I do not manage does not appear.

Social, psychosocial and communicative competence

Over a half of majority of students from full-time study manage this competence as excellent (59,5%), next very well (34,5%) and well (6%). Again there has not occurred a single answer for I do not manage.

Managerial and normative competence

Managerial and normative competence was evaluated by students as excellent (33,9%), very well (41,1%), well (25%) and evaluation – I do not manage did not occur. So from the answers is clear that while full-time female students manage it mostly well, part-time female students manage it very well.

Professionally and personally cultivating competence

Students consider this competence as excellent (52%, i.e. over a half of majority), very well (39,8%) and well (8,2%). Not even in this competence the evaluation – I do not manage does not occur.

Conclusion

The survey determined significant results based on selected indicators in the development of competences of students of reported study forms and pointed out at the current situation of the development of key competences at students. The assumption was confirmed that, female students of combined study have key competences more developed than female students of full-time study programme. There were important correlations shown among the factors that confirmed the results and pointed to reserves and the issue of bottlenecks in the development of competences of students of pre-primary education. Noteworthy is the reserve of the development of managerial competence at students of full-time study form which should be more supported by other supporting subjects in order to gain a higher level of the development for example more frequent familiarization with administrative and organizational activities of a female teacher at nursery school.

The research results can contribute to innovation of a study programme and thus increase the level of the development of competences and support streamlining of the quality study in professional development of educationalists and their competences.

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